

## STANDARD V: EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS ASSESSMENT

West Chester University's mission and strategic plan highlight the importance of student learning and success. The institutional mission indicates, "West Chester University is a community of educators that develops graduates to succeed personally and professionally and contribute to the common good" additionally the strategic plan focuses on several goals with learning at the center (Appendix [Strategic Plan](#)).<sup>1</sup> Since the previous self-study, the institution continues to strengthen its systematic assessment of student learning, including assessments that assure students are accomplishing outcomes consistent with their program of study, degree level, and the institutional mission. The institution has established a management system for the curriculum review process, has dedicated human and financial resources focused on assessment and accreditation, and has continuously updated our already efficient processes for the institutional review of academic program student learning and general education outcomes. These efforts ensure our compliance with specialized accreditation and program review at the state level, and they enable us to institute a process for the review of online education and documenting the assessment of academic support services.

### Systematic Goals & Assessments (Criteria 1, 2; ROA 8, 9, 10)

#### Ensuring Student Learning Through Curricular Review

One of the more influential developments in the assessment of student learning was the transition from a paper process to an online curricular catalog management system in 2015. The Curriculum Inventory Management ([CIM](#)) system, as described in Standard III, allows the institution to manage the approval process for all course and program proposals and track student learning outcomes. The integration provides an infrastructure for academic departments to consciously articulate how student learning is measured at the time a course or program is initiated in the curricular process. For every curriculum course or program proposal a preparer must demonstrate alignment of the programmatic student learning outcomes to the course student learning outcomes or if applicable general education outcomes and then align the assessments that demonstrate the achievement of the respective outcomes. (Appendix of sample CIM proposals)<sup>2</sup> This move has tremendously impacted the efficiency of the University's Curriculum and Academic Policies Council ([CAPC](#)) review process, while ensuring the culture of assessment and student learning is consistent across the institution.

#### Planning and Resource Allocation to Support Educational Effectiveness

There are intentional and focused planning efforts to align resources to support educational effectiveness. Within the last year an Associate Provost for Accreditation and Assessment was hired. This individual provides guidance and oversight for regional and specialized accreditation, general education and programmatic student learning assessment, academic program review, administrative assessment, and academic related federal compliance. The institution also supports educational effectiveness by providing alternate workload assignments for faculty to receive course release(s) to champion, complete, and demonstrate the faculty centeredness of this work. (Table of AWA to support assessment).<sup>3</sup> The total resource allocation for this work is XXX. Examples of alternate workload assignments include the faculty associate for teaching, learning and assessment. This individual provides direct oversight of academic program student learning assessment and leads the assurance of student learning process. The provost's office also supports XX amount of credits to the Colleges to be distributed to faculty within academic programs to

serve as assessment coordinators. Finally, each summer a team of faculty are provided compensation to oversee and participate in the assessment of general education.

#### Academic Program Student Learning Assessment

The University offers 60 baccalaureate degree programs, 40 masters degree, 4 doctoral level programs and 40 certificates across five Colleges and one School. Since 2012 the institution has implemented a comprehensive and systematic process for the assessment of student learning for all academic programs called the Assurance of Student Learning ([ASL](#)). The goals of the ASL are to communicate a consistent message regarding institutional expectations and requirements for student learning outcomes assessment; develop a process for programs to receive feedback on their plans; and allow administration to understand the status of student learning outcomes across all programs. Two platforms are used for monitoring this process, TK20 is used exclusively in the College of Education and Social Work, while Nuventive is used in the other Colleges to document and track all academic program student learning assessment plans and the institutional strategic plan. The platforms allow for the creation of reports such as curriculum maps and demonstration of the alignment of program learning outcomes to general education outcomes and specialized accreditation standards or institutional goals to Middle States standards. The ASL is overseen by the faculty associate for assessment reporting to the Associate Provost for Accreditation and Assessment, this individual chairs the University's assessment advisory committee and works closely with each Associate Dean of the Colleges as they have oversight for assessment within their units. The Provost's office provides individual faculty within each College/School release time to serve as the assessment coordinator. Assessment coordinators ensure the plans are carried out annually by following the program agreed upon student learning outcome rotation schedule. (Graphic of assessment reporting structure)<sup>4</sup>

Annually, the ASL process begins at the start of each academic year, assessment coordinators are asked to discuss their student learning assessment plan with their faculty using the previous year's results. The programs develop action plans and place this information into the institutional platform by November. Following this, all assessment plans are evaluated using an institutional rubric by the University Academic Assessment Committee (UAAC) and associate deans to determine program compliance with what the institution calls the core elements of assessment (ASL Rubric).<sup>5</sup> The rubric is based on the following criteria:

Outcomes	Program outcomes must be direct and specific. Outcomes should clearly state what students will be able to know, do, value through the completion of the assessment measure
Measures	There must be a minimum of 2 program level measures for each outcome. One of the measures must be a direct measure (sample of actual student work) while the other measure can be indirect (a report of perceived student learning)
Curriculum Map	All programs must have a curriculum map to demonstrate where their program level outcomes are first introduced (i.e. discussed), practiced (evaluated at the course level) and ultimately assessed at the program level,
Rationale	Appropriate rationale must be provided for each outcome measure, (rationale can include the course, description of measure, and/or level of student being assessed)
Criterion	Benchmark levels (criterion) must be set for all outcome measures (i.e. 80% of students will score "x" or higher on assessment measure). Having criterion will enable programs to understand whether or not they were successful in the achievement of the outcome measure
Results	Programs must annually report results of several program outcome measures and include some level of data analysis
Action Plans	All results should have an appropriate action plan to demonstrate what if anything can be improved and/or documented as a program strength as a result of the assessment cycle

The ASL has enabled the institution to create heat maps (i.e. green is good, red needs improvement) annually following the review of the plans each November. The heat maps demonstrate how programs are performing within each criterion of the 4-point Likert scale. Any program who receives below a 4 in a rubric criterion is given qualitative feedback to help them improve in their overall assessment of student learning (Reference Heat Map Charts).<sup>6</sup>

#### *Excellence in Action:*

Over the last several years the institutional rubric criterion has been modified to ensure continuous improvement of the ASL process. For example, the rubric criterion for action plans has been modified to recognize the programs who are doing assessment well and not only focus on the negative. Specifically, the criterion was revised for programs to not only indicate “action complete” when a benchmark is met but for programs to critically analyze and then articulate the strengths of the curriculum that have assisted in the achievement of the outcomes. During the past five years, significant advancements were made toward the development, restructuring, and refocusing of the program assessment plans. A particular attention was given to the utility of assessment plans and their capacity to inform potential programmatic changes to effect improvements in student learning outcomes.

The reviews demonstrate that several programs (e.g. Anthropology, Sociology, Communication and Media, Political Science, etc.) strive to collect data more effectively and efficiently, and to increase their benchmarks at the same levels used by comparable peer-institutions. To illustrate this more specifically, faculty in the Political Science department reviewed the assessment plans and tools of comparable peer-institutions and restructured their assessment plan with the intent to enhance the measurement of programmatic-level outcomes. The previous plan included course-embedded/course-specific assessments for all of the five program goals and used a simple majority benchmark of 51% students passing in the essential areas. The new plan has increased the benchmark to a super majority of 70% of students who score adequate or higher on essential areas; it retained the course-specific assessments to measure student learning outcomes for one of their program goals (written and oral communication skills); and, it added a 30-question comprehensive exam to assess learning outcomes for the four remaining program goals (knowledge of discipline, information literacy, critical thinking, and global perspectives). This newly developed exam includes multiple questions about concepts taught in the core courses, and it is implemented online at program entry and exit. The assessment data indicates that students meet and exceed the learning objectives. The department has been actively using the assessment results; it has already taken several actions to gauge the quality of the program and of its components, and to improve programmatic outcomes. (PPR from the Department of Political Science in Appendix)

#### General Education Assessment

In 2013-2014 the institution began using the Association of American College and Universities Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education (VALUE) rubrics in the assessment of general education. To allow for effective [assessment the general education](#) goals are placed on rotational schedule where two of the six goals are assessed annually. (General Education Table)<sup>7</sup> Faculty members who teach general education courses are required to identify the respective artifact that can be used for general education assessment when they propose or re-validate courses through the University’s curriculum management software system. Annually, each fall faculty teaching courses related to the goal(s) to be assessed in the upcoming spring are asked if they would like to participate in the general education assessment process. The process is led by

the Director of General Education Assessment and the Associate Provost for Assessment and Accreditation. A representative faculty sample from across Colleges and courses are selected. Upon selection the team meets prior to the beginning of the spring semester to ensure a course artifact will align with the VALUE rubric. Faculty then reconvene in the summer to review and score artifacts through meetings facilitated by the Director of General Education Assessment who is responsible for writing the annual report. (GE Assessment Reports).<sup>8</sup> In addition to documenting student learning within general education through this process it has also been a useful way to provide faculty development (Survey of GE Summer).<sup>9</sup>

#### *Excellence in Action:*

Over the last several years the General Education Assessment process has been beneficial for faculty development as well as the documentation of student learning. For example, in completing general education assessment on the goal of oral communication in 2015 it was discovered that students in 400 level courses were not as proficient in their speaking. A curriculum change was approved that now requires students to take 9 credits of speaking emphasis courses ("S"). These courses are aimed at helping develop students' skills throughout the curriculum and not just in their introductory and capstone courses. A similar finding occurred in reviewing the general education goal on ethics. Students are now required to take at least 3 credits of coursework with an ethics designation.

#### Accreditation Processes in Professional Programs

WCU's professional programs continue to use data and assessment results to make programmatic changes to ensure student learning and success. Most importantly, these programs rely on the benchmarks and standards set forth by their professional organizations and accrediting bodies to make informed curricular decisions that enhance student learning. These data-driven decisions have impacted programs' evaluation and assessment of student learning. Over the past years, several of WCU's programs with [specialized accreditation](#) have strategically overhauled their assessment plans to strengthen their student learning in critical program competencies to make their students globally competitive. Some of the changes we have witnessed were driven by state mandate, in the case of the College of Education and Social Work, and some are the results of recommendations by national and regional accrediting organizations such as the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) and the American Psychological Association Committee on Accreditation (APA-CoA).

To illustrate this, the four AACSB accredited programs (Accounting, Economics and Finance, Management, and Marketing) have a Continuous Improvement Review Process that follows a five-year cycle. The cycle ends with a site-visit, and then the process begins over again. Throughout the cycle, all programs are required to review and refine their strategic plans and complete an annual survey. In the third year, each program submits their Continuous Improvement Review Application, which includes an interim self-study report and recommendations for site visit team composition and peer and aspirant schools. During the last site accreditation in 2017, the AACSB team identified two areas of improvements. First, the team recommended that an update of the program's Assurance of Learning (AoL) system and curriculum management system to align with college-level outcomes rather than department/course level outcomes. In response to this comment, the School of Business put together a group of 70 full- and part-time faculty to participate in the redesign of their entire AoL system to make them more efficient and responsive to their

assessment. Additionally, the business programs are utilizing meaningful college-level data to inform curricular decision-making and changes. Second, the team recommended that the programs simplify and improve the accuracy of the faculty qualification system to document how faculty demonstrate academic and professional engagement. In response to this, the School of Business has overhauled its faculty qualification system to simplify and clarify the criteria. In addition, the School has implemented a more effective system to track and record faculty intellectual contributions and research productivity.

In the College of Health Sciences, two programs have responded positively using assessment results to enhance student learning based on recommendations by their accrediting organizations. In the October 2015 site visit, the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) recommended the Public Health department strengthens their MPH program evaluation and planning in the areas of assessment and reporting methods. The department has accomplished this by revising their 22 core competency requirements that serves as the foundation for the MPH program assessment.

A second program that demonstrates success in student learning in the College of Health Sciences is the Athletic Training (AT) Program. The Dean of Health Sciences noted the AT assessment plan as a model for other programs. The AT program believes that student learning transcends the assessment metrics outlined in their program. As such, the AT program has ensured the quality of student learning through an array of factors including diversity of its faculty expertise, collaborative learning environment for its students, and the exposure of students to diverse clinical experience. The AT program curriculum is broadly focused to train and prepare students for the spectrum of patient populations and professional settings. More specifically, the diversity and content expertise of the AT faculty has established an outstanding learning environment for the WCU AT students. To strengthen student learning and experience, the program is currently exploring the possibility of incorporating Community Volunteers in Medicine (CVIM) in West Chester into the clinical education requirements for both the bachelor's and professional master's programs.

The College of Science and Mathematics offers diverse and robust academic programs geared toward preparing WCU students not only for regional and national labor needs, but also, prepare individuals who are ready for the demands of the knowledge-based economy and information society. A special mention should be made of the department of Psychology, which completed its last accreditation in April 2019. The American Psychological Association Committee on Accreditation (APA-CoA) commended the department for its strengths in research, access to a range of varied practicum training sites, and focus on multiculturalism. The psychology department has modified their dissertation proposal process and the degree clearance criteria for obtaining the master's degree leading to the PsyD program. The department is utilizing APA-CoA's recommendations to streamline its assessment of specific knowledge area of cognitive-affective bases of behavior to ensure that each student has attained graduate level competence in affective areas of behavior, cognitive aspects of behavior, and the integration of cognitive and affective bases of behavior.

The College of Education and Social Work (CESW) continues to be responsive to state mandates and benchmarks set by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). During the last NCATE accreditation in 2014, the NCATE team reported that not only has the College of Education met

the six NCATE standards, but also, the College has responded positively to state mandates and implemented a four-stage field experience model that includes observation, exploration, pre-student teaching, and student teaching. Important to note that since the last NCATE visit, two of the programs have achieved national recognition from their Specialized Professional Association (SPA) with the revised assessment instruments.

#### Academic Program Review Assessment

All programs are revised at 5-year intervals as part of the [Academic Program Review](#) (APR) and are then sent to the state system. At WCU, the APR process is intended to enhance education effectiveness on curriculum improvement, and on student and faculty achievements. The curriculum is reviewed and revised based on data collected from faculty and students, alumni, community, and other stakeholders.

All academic programs are reviewed every five years unless they have completed an accreditation process during their fourth year since the prior review or are in the process of re-accreditation during their fifth year. The APR process is well documented and follows a one-year timeline, starting at the end of the spring semester and ending at the beginning of the fall semester of the following year.

The required evidence for the APR includes faculty curriculum vita, advising sheets and handbooks for all major/minor degree programs, CAPC reviewed syllabi, student enrollment and budgeting for each degree program, and student assessment data, also uploaded in the TracDat system; the APR highlights faculty and student achievements, student learning outcomes. The curriculum assessment map reports on the progress made on each goal and objective, as they align to the College's and University's mission.

The University is committed to be responsive to regional needs, improve access and serve the educational needs of a diverse student body, be a leading educational and cultural resource and partner in fostering the economic, social, and cultural vitality of southeastern Pennsylvania. Thus, the APR is expected to include an environmental analysis focused on the need for new programs and marketing of existing programs, and if applicable, justifies the need for additional physical and fiscal resources.

The report, and its supporting evidence, is reviewed by an external faculty, generally from a peer-institution, and by the dean of the College. The two reviewers' reports are submitted to the APR Coordinator and to the Deputy Provost for Academic Affairs, which will issue recommendations for improvement in the areas of assessment and curriculum, recruitment, and governance. Once the APR process is complete, the program will develop and implement an action plan to meet the recommendations and be flexible enough to integrate new developments in the field of inquiry, and additional accreditation requirements. The subsequent APR report must report on the process of implementation of the prior recommendations, evaluation of the results, or it must justify the lack of implementation.

#### Assessment of Online Education Courses

In November of 2019, the University was awarded the [QM Online Teaching Support](#) certification, which "recognizes programs that require all online faculty to undergo training in best practices for online course delivery, provide faculty with ongoing pedagogical support, encourage faculty



professional development to increase their knowledge and skill in online teaching, emphasize instructor availability and feedback to learners, and collect and use feedback from learners to improve online teaching” (Quality Matters, 2018). To achieve program certification, 3 years of data across 5 criteria must be submitted and reviewed by a QM review team.

A committee that consists of representatives from both academic and administrative offices across campus has been formed to examine and improve our current academic and student services with the goal of achieving the QM Online Learner Support certification. Fully online programs are encouraged to pursue QM Program Design Certification and QM Student Success Certification. Implementing Quality Matters aligns with the institutional mission of focusing on student success through improved course design. This provides avenues to demonstrate access to learning and continuous improvement, specifically by improving pedagogy through improved courses design, expanding professional development offerings inspired by the QM Rubric, and improving our online programs and services with appropriate processes and procedures recommended by QM program review committees (re: Student Advisory Committee) and final QM reports.

At the course level, faculty are encouraged to submit their courses for QM Course Review. A QM Course Review is based on the Quality Matters Higher Education Rubric which consists of 8 General Standards and 42 Specific Review Standards. The review is conducted by a team of three faculty, two from outside the institution and at least one subject matter expert. For a course to meet QM expectations, a course must meet all 3-point essential standards and result in a total overall score of 85 or higher out of 100 points.

#### *Excellence in Action*

During the 2017-2018 academic year, the Office of Distance Education offered an initiative in which a cohort of faculty agreed to attend the Quality Matters *Applying the Rubric* workshop, then work with their instructional designer over the next 2017-18 academic year to prepare a course of their choosing for Quality Matters Course Review. The initiative was renewed for a second academic year resulting in a total of 18 QM certified courses across 5 academic departments thus far.

In addition to the implementation of Quality Matters, online instructors are encouraged to collect student feedback through the Learning Management System using a recommended list of 35 questions incorporating Quality Matters Standard Elements. The office of Distance Education has also administered multiple University-wide online student surveys throughout the past 5 years.

### **Use of Results for Improvement of Educational Effectiveness (Criterion 3; ROA 8,9,10)**

#### *Assessment of Academic Support (Tutoring and Supplemental Instruction)*

To promote student learning and success, the Learning Assistance and Resource Center ([LARC](#)) provides academic support through tutoring and academic success coaching to enhance independent and active learners at West Chester University. In addition, the LARC adopted a Supplemental Instruction (SI) model, a nontraditional form of tutoring that focuses on collaboration, group study, and interaction for assisting students in "historically difficult" courses. While there are several academically rigorous courses that pose challenges to students, the LARC's SI targets Biology and Chemistry courses that have high rates of students that drop, fail, withdraw (DFW rates), and then provides enhanced peer-assisted study sessions on course materials outside the classroom. Peer tutors attend course lectures and facilitate weekly review sessions for students.

The LARC currently utilizes the SI tutoring model for the following courses: CHE 103 and 104: General Chemistry I & II, CHE 107: General Chemistry for Allied Health Sciences, CHE 230: Introduction to Organic and Biological Chemistry, CHE 231: Organic Chemistry I, BIO 100: Basic Biological Science, BIO 110: General Biology, BIO 230: Genetics, BIO 259: Anatomy and Physiology I, BIO 269: Anatomy and Physiology II.

The Learning Assistance and Resource Center utilizes mid- and end-semester surveys to monitor the progress of tutored students. These surveys require students to provide self-reported feedback in the following areas: I have learned study skills I can use in other courses; My tutor has helped me with the following study skills: Preparing for and taking tests, Managing my time, Reading and marking textbooks, Note taking, other; From this tutoring course, I learned to: communicate effectively, employ quantitative concepts and mathematical methods, think critically and analytically, make informed value decisions/ethical choices, and respond thoughtfully to diversity. Survey results are reviewed semesterly by LARC staff and used to update programming.

#### *Excellence in Action:*

Each semester, the LARC conducts a grade analysis to determine the effect of SI attendance on final course grade. Results from Fall 2018 show a positive correlation between the number of SI sessions attended and course GPA. A sample of results from CHE 103 is shown in appendix xxx.

#### Drop-in Tutoring

During the Spring 2019 semester, the LARC expanded its tutoring program to include a drop-in tutoring model for math and chemistry courses. This model offers a more flexible approach to tutoring and also addresses high tutoring demand in these disciplines. In Fall 2019, the program was expanded to include math, chemistry, biology, accounting and economics courses. Students who were waitlisted for weekly tutoring at the LARC now have access to these additional tutoring options to receive immediate support.

#### Pilot Developmental Math Initiative for ASP students

The Academic Success Program ([ASP](#)) and LARC staff collaborated to address low preparedness in developmental math courses for ASP students. The DFW rates of ASP students in the Fall 2018 semester was as follows: Math Q20 - 15% , Math Q30 – 25%. In collaboration with developmental math faculty, ASP and LARC staff designed and implemented a Math Empowerment Plan that diagnoses student needs and offers a collaborative approach for support.

#### Supporting Student Learning, Achieve! (FY4) and the Success Coaching Model

In 2016, the LARC initiated programming to address the needs of students who were deemed academically "at-risk" by the WCU Admissions Office. Due to their academic background the FY4 students were previously admitted to the University with reduced academic load of 12 credits. With this initiative, the FY4 students were allowed to take full academic load of 15 credits. These students were accepted into the Achieve! special admissions program and received one-on-one academic coaching support.

#### *Excellence in Action:*



During the first year of implementation, the Achieve! program proved to be successful in two different areas in terms of 2nd fall retention and total number of academic credits earned. Of the total of 260 students who initially enrolled in the program in fall 2016, 210 returned to WCU in the fall 2017 semester, corresponding to a 2<sup>nd</sup> fall retention of 80.8%. The percentage of Achieve! Students who earned between 12 and 15 credits for the 2016 and 2017 cohorts at the end of their first semester was 79.5% and 73.7% respectively compared to 30.6% for 2014 cohort and 33.3% for the 2015 cohort. However, In Fall 2019, as a result of changes in the University Strategic Plan, the Achieve! Program was reorganized into a success coaching service model that promotes the success of all undergraduate students. The Success Coaching model is described in Standard IV.

#### The Academic Success Program (ASP)

Committed to its access and diversity mission, West Chester University's Academic Success Program (formerly Academic Development Program) continues to provide quality academic enrichment program to students. The Academic Success Program (ASP) is a nationally acclaimed program at WCU that provides educational opportunities and accessibility for academically underprepared students. Its mission is grounded on the philosophy of educational access, inclusion, and opportunities for students who do not meet current admissions requirements but who demonstrate the potential to succeed in college. The Program assists students in developing basic academic skills in reading, writing, mathematics, and speaking. In addition, the Program provides academic support for students through academic advising, tutoring, mentoring and academic monitoring, counseling, financial aid assistance, and cultural enrichment. Sensitive to the unique differences among individual students, the Program endeavors to create an inclusive community environment conducive to learning and holistic development.

Based on its assessment and Periodic Program Review (PPR), the ASP has made strategic changes to its program structure and curriculum over the past 3-4 years. These changes are a culmination of various sources of information such as course grade reports (see appendix xxx), and national best practices. Also, to increase their yield and reach to larger student pool, the program strategically moved their admission deadline from January/February to December, recruited a learning specialist to provide proactive support and assessment of student to enhance their learning, and redefined the responsibilities of the program's mentoring coordinator into Student Success Coordinator with specific initiatives to support student learning and retention.

#### Curriculum Changes

Using their Periodic Program Review (PPR), the ASP made two major curriculum changes to improve students' learning. First, ASP adopted Assessment and Learning in Knowledge Spaces ([ALEKS](#)) as an effective instructional modality for teaching developmental mathematics courses. ALEKS is *"an artificial intelligence based assessment tool that zeros in on the strengths and weaknesses of a student's mathematical knowledge, reports its findings to the student, and then, if necessary, provides the student with a learning environment for bringing this knowledge up to an appropriate level for course placement"*. The decision to adopt ALEKS was driven by data that shows approximately 90% of ASP students take two developmental, non-credit bearing math courses. ALEKS has proven to be national best practices that helps students develop the mathematical competencies. The goal is by using ALEKS, ASP students who are placed in MAT Q20 could build on their mathematical skills, retake the placement test and place out of MAT Q30 to take college-level math courses. During fall 2018, 9% of the ASP students who took MAT

Q20 placed out of MAT Q30 after retaking the placement test. While data is limited surrounding the success of ALEKS to the general population, WCU is now adopting the ALEKS placement for all 2020 incoming first year students.

Historically, ASP has relied on a standard reading placement test by Pearson. However, using its internal assessment data, ASP worked with the Literacy Department and created placement test that better assess reading levels and learning needs of the ASP students. This led to the creation of a for-credit course, EDR 120 (College Reading and Study Skills). Starting summer 2019, students in ASP no longer take a developmental reading course, a move that should impact student retention, credit accumulation, and timely graduation. With the discontinuation of the reading placement test, we see approximately 97% of the students earning a passing grade EDR 120 and earning college credit. This is the direction developmental programs across the nation are moving and WCU is proud to follow suit.

### **Assessment of the Effectiveness of Assessment Processes (Criterion 5; ROA 8,10)**

WCU regularly engages constituents in evaluating assessment processes. The University Academic Assessment Committee (UAAC) made up faculty, administrators, and students assess their processes annually. The committee solicits feedback around the process from the associate deans and assessment coordinators. The committee then discusses trends seen throughout the review cycle and hosts brown bag lunches on topics of interest or one on one sessions with individual departments.

As WCU navigates the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is essential to assess student learning achievement during these unprecedented times. The Office of the Provost and the UAAC will be developing a plan to assess what ramifications were seen throughout the spring and summer of 2020. The ASL process continued through the pandemic with the faculty associate for assessment providing flexibility to the Colleges by adjusting deadlines to the ASL review cycle.

#### *Excellence in Action*

After heat map feedback was received from associate deans, changes were made to the assessment cycle. Some viewed heat map scores that fell on the lower end of the scale as punitive in nature with little room for improvement. The University Academic Assessment Committee (UAAC) took this feedback into consideration and viewed two changes as opportunities for improvement to the process. First, the committee identified the need to promote and communicate the ASL process as an ongoing improvement cycle. The programs that fall on the lower end of the scale have time to improve in upcoming assessment cycles. In addition, the committee added a step to the process during the 2017-18 assessment cycle. A secondary review period was added in which changes can be submitted to committee members to clarify scores on the rubric. After implementation, the committee has received positive feedback on these changes.

General education assessment processes have been continually assessed since the adoption of the AAC&U VALUE Rubrics. Most recently, the process has been enhanced by lengthening the term the General Education Assessment Director serves. Previously, the position rotated on an annual basis, which continually had a new faculty member in the role thus lengthening the adjustment period to learn the role and responsibilities. Assigning a dedicated individual in this role, as in the ASL process, more professional knowledge can be built and shared with peers. As with the ASL process, the general education assessment process continued through the spring and summer 2020 semesters, while navigating a national pandemic. The Director and Associate Provost

offered faculty members who volunteered to participate in the 2020 general education assessment process the preceding fall semester an option to withdraw from participating, yet the majority of the faculty members continued with plans to move the general education assessment process forward as planned.

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